Recruitment Guide

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Introduction

Your vacancy

Advertising your role

Shortlisting

Assessment and selection

Making a decision

Considerations when recruiting internationally

Welcome and induction

Example interview questions

Recruitment process overview

Introduction

Our _Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020: Investing in Knowledge and Opportunity_ outlines that we aspire to attract, retain and develop the very best people in a high trust, academically-led environment.

This guide has been put together to help you, as a hiring manager, with the attraction element of that aspiration, whilst making recruitment straightforward, successful and enjoyable.

The guide has been developed in response to feedback received from our candidates and hiring managers, and is intended to walk you through the recruitment process from start to finish, providing advice and guidance on what to remember at each stage. It has been designed to be picked up whenever you need support on any element of recruitment, rather than to be read from start to finish.

We actively encourage you to think through your recruitment issues and strategies but ALL recruitment activity should be discussed and agreed by your local Human Resources team at an early stage, who will be able to provide a range of advice and support to help you. Support is also available at any stage in the process from the central Recruitment team.

What is a structured approach to recruitment and why should I use one?

All organisations engage in recruitment at some point. However, the success of recruitment varies significantly. Recruitment failures are commonplace across all sectors and, with the average cost of recruiting the wrong person being between £8,200 and £12,000 (according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development), it can be a costly process to get wrong.

Structuring the recruitment process provides a platform for greater consistency which should, in turn, provide you with consistently better outcomes. However, 'structure' does not mean the recruitment process needs to be _identical_ for every role you recruit to and this guide will talk you through our approach and the decisions you'll need to make to get the best outcome.

During any recruitment process, you are representing the University and have a significant impact on how candidates perceive us as both an employer and an organisation in general. A structured approach to recruitment will help you and the University present itself in a welcoming and professional manner and ensure that, regardless of outcome, all of our candidates have a positive experience with us.

Achieving successful outcomes

A common theme in unsuccessful recruitment is a lack of structured preparation; that 'this role' does not require it for whatever reason (for example time, seniority, cost). The best way to ensure success is through investing sufficient resources into the preparation and getting it right first time around.

Spending some time re-writing an out-of-date job description may not seem like the best use of your time; however, if you don't do it, failing to recruit or recruiting the wrong individual, could be considerably more time consuming and costly in the long-term. Investing time in your recruitment is always worthwhile.

The candidate experience

Although much of our recruitment process will be driven by our needs as recruiters, we should never forget our duty to our candidates and their experience. This is a two-way process with us judging them and, in turn, them making judgements on us. Ultimately it's the candidate who will make the decision to join us, should we make an offer. Would you accept an offer if your recruitment experience had been poor? With that in mind, we should always treat our candidates the way we would wish to be treated ourselves, and recruitment decisions should strike a balance between making sure we get what we need and vice versa.

Your vacancy 7

Your vacancy

Determining your requirements

To ensure we have the capacity and capability to deliver our Strategic Plan, it is absolutely crucial that consideration is given to your departmental resourcing requirements. When a vacancy is created, for example, by an individual leaving the organisation, it's very easy to assume that the best solution is to recruit to replace them, on a like-for-like basis.

However, a vacancy in your team is an opportunity to review your requirements, giving you the flexibility to adapt your resourcing strategy if necessary; taking a step back and taking a little time to review your present and future requirements can be extremely worthwhile.

Writing the Candidate Brief

The purpose of the Candidate Brief is to provide an individual with an outline of the main duties and responsibilities of the role; give them an overview of what they'll actually be doing. It needs to be written in such a way as to engage people in the role, whilst remaining a fair representation of the position you are offering. The guidelines below should be used in conjunction with the Candidate Brief template available from HR.

Top Tip

The updated Candidate Brief template (introduced in mid-2016) promotes the culture and environment of the University through photos of the campus and our staff. It also introduced a more concise format, making it an easier, clearer and hopefully more attractive read for candidates.

Candidate Brief front cover

The front cover should contain practical information about the job including:

Role title: The role title should be clear and straight forward, so candidates are immediately aware of the type of role it is. There has been a tendency to move towards more creative job titles but this often leads to confusion over what the role is. For example, if you require an administrator to work on a project, call it a Project Administrator not a Project Co-ordination Executive. Your <u>HR Manager/Officer</u> will be able to provide more support and advice on this.

Role details: A comprehensive list of job details will be found on the relevant job page on the online application system but grade, salary and tenure (if fixed-term) should also be clear for candidates to see on the cover page of the brief.

Candidate Brief role summary

The brief should open with a summary of the role and the key requirements in a short paragraph. This will help candidates quickly decide if they are interested or not. The summary can start with two or three questions which are designed to both draw the reader's attention to the key elements of the role, along with the challenges it presents, whilst at the same time introducing aspects of the skills and experience you are looking for. These questions are likely to start with 'Are you…', 'Do you have…', 'Do you want…', 'Would you like…', for example:

Senior academic leadership position:	***Administrative position:***
Are you an experienced academic looking for a challenging new senior leadership position? Are you passionate about delivering world-leading research and an exceptional student experience? Do you have the ability to provide strategic vision and leadership across a diverse University Faculty?	*Are you customer focussed and excited about delivering an outstanding service to our staff? Do you have general office and administrative experience, in addition to exceptional organisational skills? Do you want to join a team supporting the recruitment and retention of world-class talent?*

This section should provide a candidate with a very quick overview of the role and what you are looking for, so that, in just a few seconds, they are able to make a decision about whether to read further or not.

The questions should be followed by a short paragraph outlining a little more about the role, the context of the opportunity and what you are looking for in a candidate to fulfil the role. This should be concise and should address the reader directly, for example by using 'you' as opposed to 'the successful candidate'. For example:

Senior management role:

> *We're looking for a General Manager for the world-leading Automotive Research Development Group. You will be an integral part of the management team with considerable responsibility for helping set the strategic direction of the department, in addition to providing leadership and management to a team of over 100 staff.*

Administrative position:

> *We are looking for a professional and proactive individual to join our administration team. You will bring your excellent customer services skills to the delivery of this key service which focusses on research, production and distribution of our world-leading automotive parts.*

This section should concentrate on the role and its requirements. You will not be providing substantial information about the faculty/service but web links to this information can be included (for example a link to the faculty website). The focus here should always be on the role itself.

Candidate Brief 'What does the role entail?'

Following the summary, a list of approximately 10-12 main areas of responsibility should provide candidates with a more detailed idea of what the job entails. This list will provide the candidate with sufficient information to determine their level of responsibility for each area listed by using words such as 'lead', 'develop', 'maintain', 'co-ordinate' and 'advise'. For example, 'maintain a database system' has a very different meaning from 'design and develop a database system'.

The brief has to also reflect a sense of the priorities; therefore, areas of responsibility should be covered in proportionate detail and listed in order of priority/importance. It is important that the job description provides fair representation of the position you are offering, as either under selling or over selling the role can result in the successful candidate feeling a disconnect between the expectations of the role and reality. This can potentially result in longer-term issues, for example, with regards to performance and turnover.

You should also avoid using acronyms and University of Leeds-specific terminology which external candidates may not understand. You shouldn't cover every detail; a sentence is already included in the template which outlines that the job description is not an exhaustive list of responsibilities and that other areas of responsibility may need to be adopted in line with the grade for the post. This is also detailed in our employment contracts.

Candidate Brief 'What will you bring to the role?'

The 'What will you bring to the role' section outlines the qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience, competencies and behaviours an individual requires to successfully undertake the role. These should be split into essential (you will have) and desirable (you may have) requirements.

Crucially, candidates must meet ALL of the essential requirements to be shortlisted and appointed to the role, so make sure you only include criteria that are really needed.

You must also ensure that the criteria are relevant and that their inclusion can be justified given the duties you have listed. As an extreme example, we could be challenged if 'current driving licence' was included in a role where no driving was required. There should be a direct correlation between the duties and the specification criteria.

If the specification contains more than 10 points, double check it to ensure it is as concise as possible and avoids any duplication. Duplication of specification points accounts for nearly half (49% in 2015) of complaints about our application process; therefore, it may affect the quality and quantity of applications received. It also makes shortlisting a much longer task to complete.

Some of the areas you may wish to address in the specification are:

- ***Qualifications -*** By listing a qualification as essential, you are committing to only shortlisting, and ultimately employing, an individual who meets that exact requirement. In many cases this is perfectly reasonable; for example, you would expect a dentist to have completed the appropriate dental degree and professional training.

  However, be careful how you phrase essential qualification criteria so as not to exclude potentially suitable applicants. For example, you decide that a good level of numeracy is required, therefore you include 'GCSE Mathematics Grade A-C' in your essential specification. By including this you can now only shortlist and employ individuals with that qualification (or equivalent qualification), even if candidates are able to demonstrate good numeracy via another means (for example through experience of working as an Accounts Assistant for many years). Therefore, try to make your essential specification a reflection of your requirements, not how you perceive those requirements could be met.

- ***Experience -*** Requesting a certain number of years of experience should be considered carefully because it does not give an indication of the quality, depth and breadth of experience

gained and can, in certain circumstances, be considered discriminatory. Again, by including an essential length of time requirement you are committing to only shortlisting, and ultimately employing, an individual who meets that exact requirement. So, if you ask for 'three years' experience' and a potentially suitable candidate with two and a half years' experience applies, you cannot shortlist them.

You also need to remember that experience may not be directly transferable, as the expectations of a role elsewhere may be different from yours. For example, three years' experience as a Marketing Officer here, may be very different to what the same role would encompass with the council over the same duration.

With that in mind, it can be useful to think about what a candidate with three years' experience would have that a candidate with two years' would not, which will allow you to consider whether there is a better way of expressing this in your specification. For example, if the difference is a depth of understanding of a particular marketing technique, it may be better to write that into your specification explicitly rather than assume that the number of years' experience covers it. It's potentially clearer to candidates and safer for us in terms of not making assumptions.

In most cases, asking for anything over five years of relevant experience could be considered age discrimination, so you must discuss such an inclusion with your local HR Manager in the first instance, to be sure it can be justified legally.

- *Knowledge and skills -* Requirements need to be specific and at a level appropriate for the role. Try to avoid wording that is open to interpretation. It's common to see phrases in person specifications such as 'Good IT skills' or 'Knowledge of Microsoft Office'; however, it is unlikely that a candidate will be able to determine what you are looking for by wording something in this way. Being more specific, for example, 'Working knowledge of Microsoft Outlook or similar software to schedule meetings and events' will allow a candidate to more clearly understand what is required, and you are more likely to get applications from candidates who are suitable.

- *Behaviours and working styles -* Behaviours and ways of working can underpin how people do their job. When looking at including these in a person specification, keep in mind the University values and how an individual can display these values in the work they undertake. Be careful, when outlining behaviours and ways of working, that you do not unintentionally discriminate against the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act (2010). For example, using 'Ability to work in a young vibrant team environment' could be perceived as age discriminatory.

- *Desirable criteria -* Desirable criteria are those which would be beneficial for undertaking the role. Including several desirable criteria is beneficial, as, if you receive many applications from individuals who meet the essential specification, you'll find it helpful to be able to shortlist against desirable criterial to distinguish between candidates.

However, don't include them just for the sake of it. As with the essential specification, they must be justifiable against the duties you have written. Try to think in terms of what the candidate needs from day one (essential) and what would be useful for them to have but that could be developed over time (desirable).

- ▪ **Other issues to consider -** Avoid using unexplained acronyms and specific terminology which external candidates may not understand and avoid duplication and cut out unnecessary requirements which are likely to be covered by other areas of the specification, for example, 'good keyboard skills' for a high level specialist IT role.

Top Tip

Once you've written your criteria, it's a good idea to take a step back and think about whether all the essential points combined are reasonable to expect from a candidate applying for the role, or whether some should be removed or moved to the desirable section. It is quite common to see specifications where each individual point is reasonable but the likelihood that an individual will be able to fulfil all of them is highly unlikely.

Candidate Brief final page

The final page contains some essential information for candidates that is prepopulated within the design template, including information on disability, criminal records and working in Leeds. This space can also be used for any other links which may be useful for candidates to be aware of, for example faculty website for more contextual information.

Role evaluation using HERA

To ensure consistency of job grades across the University and to uphold the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, we use a recognised role evaluation methodology (HERA) to evaluate each role we advertise. Evaluating a role in line with the HERA methodology requires specialist training; therefore, all roles will be assessed by your local HR team for evaluation prior to advertising.

Sometimes market factors may mean that the salary level for a role is not competitive and it may be necessary to advertise a market supplement. Market supplements are payments made in addition to the salary for a specific post which are paid when the market rate (other employers' higher pay rates) prevents the University from being able to recruit staff on the salary indicated by role analysis alone.

If you believe a role may be difficult to recruit to due to external market salary expectations, please talk to your local HR team with regards to whether paying a market or other supplement is the best way forward for you.

Key Points – Your vacancy

- **Determining your requirements** – Take a little time to review the requirements of your team; don't simply recruit 'like for like' without giving thought to your current and future requirements.

- **Candidate Brief - Role Summary** – The role summary will help candidates quickly decide if they are interested or not, and is, therefore, crucial to attracting the right candidates. Take some time to make sure it describes your job.

- **Candidate Brief - What does the role entail?** – The job description should provide a fair representation of the position you are offering and should be written in a concise and engaging manner. You need not include every single duty; what candidates are looking for is a clear overview of the main duties and responsibilities, so they can get a realistic preview of the job they'll be undertaking.

- **Candidate Brief - Person Specification** – Specification points should be split into essential and desirable requirements and should be written in a concise and clear manner. As a guide, you should be looking for approximately ten essential requirements and five desirables.

- **Role Evaluation using HERA** – Send all of your completed job descriptions to your local HR team so they can be assessed via the role evaluation process.

Advertising your role   15

Advertising your role

Authorisation

Before any advertising can take place, authorisation to fill your vacancy must be sought. Your local HR team will be able to advise on your local process if you are unsure. Authorisation will usually involve Finance, HR and the Dean/Head of Service considering the business need for the role and providing the necessary authorisation to fill the vacancy.

Redeployment

The Redeployment Service offers support to existing members of staff who are within six months of their employment with the University coming to an end or who have another reason to find alternative employment within the University (for example due to the closure of a service/unit).

As part of our commitment to maintaining job security for our staff wherever possible, all vacant roles (over three months in duration) are required to be advertised via Redeployment for a period of two weeks prior to them being advertised externally.

The majority of people looking for roles through Redeployment are those coming to the end of a fixed-term contract, so this can often be a much quicker and easier way of sourcing a suitable candidate who, in most cases, already has substantial and proven experience.

Your local HR team will arrange for your role to be advertised through Redeployment but for more information on how the Redeployment Service can help find you a suitable candidate for your role, please contact your local HR team or the Redeployment Service directly on x32297.

Top Tip

If recruiting to your role is urgent, the Redeployment Service can be an excellent source of candidates who already know the University and may be able to start at short notice. You can search for available candidates yourself via the online redeployment register.

Advertising internally

If the post isn't filled through Redeployment it will usually be advertised externally to the wider job market. There may be limited situations where a job can be advertised internally to all University employees in the first instance, and if you believe there are special circumstances that make this desirable for your vacancy, please contact your local HR team to discuss.

There may also be situations where you wish to make a role available for internal development opportunities; for example, you may have a vacancy at a higher grade and already have a number of people within your school or service who have the expertise to take on the role. Again, if this is the case, please discuss it with your local HR Manager in the first instance.

Writing your advert

Standard online adverts

For standard online advertising (for example on leeds.ac.uk and jobs.ac.uk) the role summary section from the candidate brief should provide the majority of the content.

The advert should summarise the role and the key requirements in a paragraph, helping candidates quickly decide if the role is of interest. The advert, as with the summary, should aim to promote the role to suitable candidates and should concentrate on the role. Any information you wish to include about the department or University should follow this.

Be aware that some online advertisers may impose restrictions on the size and format of the advert, so you may have to work around these if you wish to advertise with that provider. Your local HR team will be able to advise you on any restrictions in place.

Top Tip

Many individuals will find roles through keyword searches online. Try to think about including words or phrases you would search for online if you were looking for a similar job. Making the job title easily understandable and one likely to be searched for, is a good start.

Print adverts

Print adverts are relatively uncommon today as most advertising is undertaken online. However, there may be some circumstances in which placing a print advert is deemed the best way of reaching the target audience.

One significant benefit of print advertising is where we wish to make a statement about University activity to the wider world. In this case, the print advert is more about publicising University activity (for example large investment in a new library) as opposed to candidate attraction, so we usually recommend using this approach as one part of a wider advertising campaign.

Print adverts are likely to have restrictions on the size and format, so it is unlikely that you'll be able to, or want to, post the entire role summary. You will need to determine the number of words you can write and use them effectively to promote the role and signpost individuals to where they need to go to find out further information and apply. In terms of trying to engage people through print, sometimes saying less can actually be saying more!

If you are looking to undertake a large advertising campaign using print media, always contact your local HR team or the Recruitment team in central HR for support.

Top Tip

Advertising in print can be very expensive. A reasonable size advert in a national newspaper can cost over £8,000 for one showing. A similar investment online can potentially reach a wider audience over a much longer period. For example, the most expensive advertising space on jobs.ac.uk is approx. £8,000 for an entire month [at 2016 prices].

Advertising options

Advertising on our website (jobs.leeds.ac.uk)

All of our roles published externally are advertised on jobs.leeds.ac.uk and our corporate website is popular and attracts many job seekers approaching us directly. We also ask all applicants to submit their application via the website, unless they require a reasonable adjustment.

The piece of software which manages our online applications is called 'Stonefish' and this can be set up in a variety of ways to tailor the application process to your specific role requirements. Here are the main decisions you need to make when asking your HR team to advertise a role:

▪ **Pre-screening questions** – Sometimes called 'killer' questions, the system allows you to ask your candidates closed questions (with a 'yes' or 'no' response) in relation to the person specification before a candidate starts applying for a role. For example, if the role requires a degree, the system can ask 'Have you obtained a degree?'. If the candidate answers 'no', they will be told that they do not meet the specification for the role and will be returned to their home screen. This feature can reduce the number of individuals

applying without meeting the essential criteria, saving time for everyone involved. Any number of pre-screening questions can be added to your role but cannot be added once the application process is open.

- **Application form** – There are several application forms depending upon whether you wish the candidates to provide information via the system or via attachments (for example their CV). Your local HR team will be able to advise you what is appropriate for your role and will arrange for the system to be set up accordingly.

- **Supporting statements** – You can set up the online application system so it requires candidates to write a supporting statement for each individual person specification point or just a single statement to support the entire application. Wherever possible, we prefer the former approach as this is beneficial to shortlisters, although there are certain roles where this approach won't be appropriate. Your local HR team will be able to advise what is appropriate for your role.

- **Selection information** – If possible, it is a good idea to provide information on when you expect the next stage of the process will take place, even if an exact date has not yet been confirmed. For example, including 'Interviews will take place during the week commencing 1 May' gives candidates an indication as to the pace at which the vacancy will move forward and allow them to make any necessary plans.

Top Tip

When considering asking candidates to write a supporting statement for each individual specification point, take a look at how many points you've included. Is it a reasonable amount (approx. 10) and have you checked for any repetition? Repetition of specification points is the single largest area of complaint from candidates in relation to our application process.

External advertising options (booking adverts)

Your local HR team, in conjunction with our recruitment advertising agency, will be able to advise you with regards to where to advertise, the associated costs, and will book all 'paid for' advertising for you. Our advertising agency usually offers discounted rates in comparison to dealing with the media source directly, so you must always book advertising via your local HR team who will liaise with our advertising agency for you. This approach also ensures that, if there are multiple vacancies across your service or faculty, that there is an opportunity to coordinate the vacancies and pull them together into composite adverts.

How widely you decide to advertise your role is largely dependent upon how easy you think it is going to be attract enough suitable candidates. The most important thing is that your advertising meets the needs for the role; however, those needs will differ for each individual role, so there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Roles which are relatively straightforward to attract suitable candidates

Some roles will attract many applications, sometimes several hundred, without advertising the role very widely. These are usually roles which require widely available skills and appeal to a substantial audience, or positions which offer exceptional development opportunities within an 'in demand' profession. For these roles, advertising on our own website (jobs.leeds.ac.uk), in addition to the following, may be enough:

- **Jobs.ac.uk** – The University has an arrangement with jobs.ac.uk which allows us to post basic adverts free of charge. Enhancing your advert with logos, photographs and videos costs between £100-300; prominent home page adverts range from £500-2000 per week. The enhancements can boost views of your advert by up to nine times in comparison to a basic advert.
- **JobCentre plus** – We advertise most of our jobs on the government job site, again free of charge.
- **Professional social media accounts/academic networking sites** – If you have professional social media accounts on sites such as LinkedIn, ResearchGate or Twitter, or access to academic networking sites, use these to publicise your role to professional contacts.

If you have any doubt over whether the basic advertising strategy listed above is sufficient, your local HR team will be able to advise you what is appropriate for your role, considering your needs and budget.

Roles in which it is going to be difficult to attract suitable candidates (and attracting non-EU citizens)

Some roles will require significant resources to attract suitable candidates. These are usually roles which require very specialist qualifications and/or experience.

There are many options available in terms of advertising difficult to fill positions or particularly high profile positions and quite often 'straight forward' advertising is not necessarily the best way forward. In addition to your local HR hubs, the Recruitment team in HR are available to discuss your requirements and to plan an approach to advertising should you feel that would be useful.

It is also worth noting that for those positions where we may need to recruit non-EU (or EEA) nationals, we have to advertise the position for at least 28 days in at least two relevant sources. This is in order to satisfy the 'resident labour market test' required for the University to support visa applications for individuals who currently do not have the right to work in the UK. Always take advice from your local HR team with regards to this, or you may not ultimately be able to appoint your preferred candidate.

Social media advertising

Over the last 10 years, social media has become another means of reaching potentially suitable candidates for your role. Currently, we do not have a central social media advertising platform, as we advertise such a diverse range of roles and a general feed would be unlikely to reach the desired target audience.

We do, however, encourage you as hiring managers (and your colleagues) to use your professional social media presence to advertise roles to your connections online. You are likely to know other people within your profession and this is a much more targeted way of highlighting your vacancy to potential applicants.

Whether you use, Twitter, Linkedin, Researchgate or any other platform, keep the message simple:

> *'We're advertising for a new Marketing Director <Link to job>'*

> *'Join our Marketing team - we are recruiting a Marketing Officer <Link to job>'*

> *'We're looking for a new web developer <Link to job>'*

For recruitment purposes we recommend you only use social media platforms you use for professional purposes, as opposed to sites you use to communicate to friends and family.

Top Tip

As the economic situation has improved over the last couple of years, we have seen competition for candidates increase significantly. If you've not recruited to a role for a few years, you may find it's now harder to recruit than it was. By keeping an eye on applicant numbers, you can always increase the advertising you undertake part-way through the process should you find the role is not attracting the volume or quality of applications you expected. Our recruitment system keeps track of completed applications, including how many people have started applying, and your HR team will be able to share this information with you as well as provide advice on the effectiveness of your approach.

Recruitment agencies

Permanent or fixed-term recruitment

Many recruitment companies offer search and selection services to source candidates suitable for your role. Most recruitment companies are commercial businesses and, if you use their services, you are likely to incur what can be a substantial charge. Always contact your local HR team if you are considering using a recruitment agency, as they'll be able to advise you which agencies we use and which have performed well for similar roles in the past. Most agencies will use one of two payment structures:

- **Payment on delivery:** This is the most common payment structure for salaries under £50k. If you decide to appoint one of the agency's candidates, you'll be charged a percentage of their starting salary or a fixed fee. It's not unusual for standard fees to be 25-35% of starting salary (although this is usually negotiable), so engaging an agency candidate can cost several thousand pounds. However, if you choose not to appoint then there will be no payment.
- **Upfront payment:** A more common payment structure for senior roles is an upfront fee, for the search and selection of a suitable candidate. It's not unusual to have to still pay the agency for their services even if an appointment is not made.

If you are thinking about engaging an agency to help you with your search, you must speak with your local HR team in the first instance. It may also be necessary to speak with your local purchasing team.

Many agencies will also speculatively introduce candidates to you either over the phone or via email. However, by accepting applications in this manner you may be unintentionally accepting the agency terms and conditions, as well as authorising someone we potentially know very little about to represent both you and the University to external candidates. We do not advise you engage with agencies providing speculative applications.

**Top Tip**

When selecting an agency to work with, beware of any bold claims about their abilities, as many agents are working on a commission basis and will go to great lengths to secure the opportunity to work with you. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Always speak with your local HR team as they will be aware of agencies with whom we have had prior relationships and positive experiences.

Temporary recruitment

Many recruitment companies offer temporary recruitment services which will provide you with a worker who is employed by the agency for a temporary period of time. These services are useful in circumstances where additional resources are required for a short period (usually less than six months).

The University has a number of contracted suppliers who know the University culture and with whom preferential terms and conditions have already been established. Therefore, if you require a temporary member of staff, contact your local HR team for details or access the HR website for a list of the companies we use. Again, be wary of agencies who speculatively introduce candidates to you. If you think there is a good reason to use an agency not on the approved list, always talk to your local HR team for their advice first.

You will need to seek financial authorisation, in the same way you would for any other post, and provide the agency with a purchase order number before they will be able to place anyone with you.

Temporary workers are usually paid by the agency and so you will be asked to authorise the hours or days of work completed on a weekly basis and then you'll be invoiced by the agency.

With temporary recruitment, you'll normally have to pay an hourly charge to the agency for them supplying their worker rather than a one off payment. The charge is usually calculated in the following way:

Worker pay* + Workers Holiday Pay + Employer National Insurance + Agency Profit = Charge Rate.

*This will usually be the bottom point of the relevant University scale.

Temporary agency workers can provide flexible staffing; however, they are still covered by a number of aspects of employment legislation. To protect the interests of temporary agency workers, the Agency Workers Regulations (2010) provides agency workers entitlement to the same basic employment and working conditions as if they had been recruited directly, if or when they complete a qualifying period of 12 weeks with the same employer.

These entitlements relate to pay and other basic working conditions (annual leave, rest breaks, etc.) and also include things like pregnant agency workers being allowed to take paid time off for ante-natal appointments. Therefore, if you hire a temporary agency worker, you need to make sure you factor in the cost and management time required to remain compliant with legislation.

Top Tip

Whilst many agencies will have numerous individuals available at short notice, if you are looking for someone with specialist skills or the ability to work a non-standard working pattern, you may need to provide the agency with a few days' notice to find the best candidate for you.

Key Points – Advertising your role

- **Authorisation** – This must be sought before any advertising can take place. Your local HR team will be able to advise on your local process if you are unsure.

- **Redeployment** – All vacant roles (over three months in duration) are required to be advertised via Redeployment for a period of two weeks prior to them being advertised externally.

- **Advertising internally** – For the vast majority of cases there will be no justification for advertising a role to internal applicants only. However, talk to your local HR team if you think an 'internal only' advert needs to be considered.

- **Writing your advert** – Adverts may only have a reader's attention for a few seconds, so the first two or three lines are vital as to whether they'll read further or not. Do this by telling them a little about the role and what you are looking for in a candidate.

- **Advertising options** – Most recruitment advertising is now undertaken online. You have to advertise your roles on our website and we also have contracts with jobs.ac.uk and Global Academy Jobs, so you can advertise on these sites for free. If you wish to advertise further, contact your local HR for their advice and support.

- **Recruitment agencies** – Recruitment agencies are commercial businesses who make a profit from either supplying their own temporary staff or searching for candidates for fixed-term or permanent appointments. The University has several contracted agency suppliers of temporary staff so, if you need a temporary member of staff, contact your local HR team.

Shortlisting   25

Shortlisting

Using a structured approach to shortlisting

Shortlisting can be quite a time consuming activity, so structuring it to ensure you use your time efficiently to produce consistent outcomes will be of considerable benefit.

Shortlisting is an assessment of the applications against the specification for the role. It must be undertaken by at least two suitable people, independently in the first instance, who then come together to agree a final shortlist.

To help ensure our process is fair and inclusive, the University recommends that all staff involved in recruitment and selection undertake equality training.

Approaching it in the following way will help:

- Applications should initially be reviewed in a methodical way against the essential specification, to see if they meet the minimum criteria. Scoring each candidate against each criteria can be beneficial, as it allows you to see which ones best match the specification and enables a degree of ordering.
- You should not shortlist anyone who does not meet **all** of the essential specification (this differs slightly for redeployees, so please refer to the redeployment guidance in these cases).
- If, after reviewing the essential specification, you have too many candidates to progress to the next stage of the process, you should review all the candidates, who meet the essential specification, against the desirable criteria to further reduce the numbers shortlisted.
- Only information contained within the application should be assessed. Assumptions that a candidate possesses certain skills or experience based upon current or previous job titles or previous knowledge of the candidate must **not** be made.
- If, after reviewing all the essential and desirable criteria, you still have too many candidates to progress to the next stage of the process, consider using an additional means of reducing the shortlist (for example telephone/skype interview). This should be applied to all remaining candidates, not just the ones where you consider there are question marks.
- Your local HR team will be able to provide you with any help and support you need.

Shortlisting online or on paper

Shortlisting can be undertaken either online or on paper depending on what works best for you. Further information on how to shortlist using the Stonefish system is accessible within the system itself.

If you shortlist online, you'll benefit from the shortlisting tools which allow you to review and score candidates online. It is also less wasteful (no printing!) and the information is stored securely and destroyed in line with information governance guidelines, so you do not need to worry about this.

If you do not use the system, shortlisting forms are a good way to structure your assessment. Example forms can be found on the HR website. Any paperwork completed as part of the shortlisting process must be kept and uploaded to the recruitment system afterwards.

In the event of a challenge to our process, candidates can request copies of our recruitment paperwork/notes and therefore, anything we record, be it on paper or on the system, must be professional in nature and directly related to the person specification.

Inviting candidates to interview and/or other assessment

In most cases, your local HR team or HR Administrator will invite successful candidates to interview, so you need to provide them with the necessary details. The invites are usually sent electronically via the online system so you do not need to worry about drafting an invite email yourself.

However, when inviting candidates to interview and/or other assessment, there are several things you need to consider:

- You need to give the candidates at least one week's notice to attend the interview, so they have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements to attend. Ideally, you will have also given an indication of your proposed interview date in your advert.
- You should provide candidates with an indication of what to expect on the day and how long it is anticipated to take, so they can plan their preparation and time accordingly.

- You need to provide clear information on what time and where you wish them to report and if you expect them to undertake any pre-interview work.
- Try to be as flexible as possible. If a candidate cannot attend at the time suggested, work with them to see if an alternative can be arranged.
- Allow enough time on the day so as to not feel rushed. Don't over commit to the number of individuals you can interview in a day. Interviewing is tiring for everyone involved, including you. Make sure you have time to have a break and plan in some flexibility to deal with any unexpected delays on the day. Keeping candidates waiting may add to their anxiety.
- You should ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate in the process and take any reasonable requests into account when planning the selection process.

Above all, remember that this is a two-way process so, whilst we have to make sure our process works for us as employers, we should always be considering the candidate experience and how we are coming across to them. Remember, it's only the candidate who will decide whether to accept the job, so approaching selection in a professional and flexible way is likely to result in better outcomes all round.

Top Tip

We should not try to catch candidates out at assessment, as it is not the best way to start an effective working relationship and does not create a good impression of the University. Be upfront with candidates with regards to what to expect on the day by letting them know what the assessment will include. This will help put them at ease which, in turn, will help them perform naturally and to their best.

Advising candidates they've not been shortlisted for your role

When advising candidates that they've not been shortlisted for your role, there are several things to bear in mind:

- You should try to inform individuals as soon as is possible that they have been unsuccessful. Your local HR team will do this via the online system in the form of an email to the candidate.
- You do not, at this stage, have to offer to provide feedback to candidates. However, if you choose to offer it you should extend that offer to all unsuccessful candidates.
- If you have a number of candidates 'in reserve', do not contact them to advise them that they are unsuccessful until you are sure this is the case. Depending on timescales, you may wish to let them know their application is still under consideration and give them an indication as to when you'll be able to let them know the outcome of their application.

- Remember that just because they were not successful for your post doesn't mean they won't be suitable for another role, so treating unsuccessful candidates positively and with professionalism is crucial at all times. We want them to be happy with their experience, even if they didn't get the job, talk positively about their experience to their friends and family and consider applying again in the future.

Top Tip

It's easy to give candidates a bad/the wrong impression as this candidate describes: 'I was once advised that I was the fourth choice candidate and that, because they could only interview three people, I was the reserve. A day later the company informed me that because someone had dropped out I could attend if I liked; however, I chose not to, as it seemed like I was only going to be there to make up the numbers and it would be a waste of my time'.

Key Points - Shortlisting

- *Using a structured approach to shortlisting* – At least two individuals need to review the applications in a methodical way against the role specification and agree a shortlist. Only information contained within the application should be assessed and, unless it is a redeployment situation, only those who meet **all** of the essential specification should be shortlisted.

- *Online or on paper* – We recommend you use the online system to shortlist. However you can still download and print applications if you prefer to do it this way. If you are using paper, make sure you keep the candidate details secure (they contain personal information).

- *Inviting candidates to interview and/or other assessment* – You need to give the candidates at least one week's notice to attend the interview (or other selection tests). The actual assessment should be planned well in advance of the day, so you can give the candidates an idea of what to expect, and how you will be testing them.

- *Advising candidates you've not shortlisted for your role* – Inform individuals as soon as possible that they have been unsuccessful. You do not, at this stage, have to offer to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

Assessment and selection   31

Assessment and selection

Overview

Selection is a two-way process and, as recruiters, we must remember this at all times. Whilst you may be concentrating on selecting the best candidate for your job, don't forget that candidates you invite to participate in selection are making a judgement about whether the role, University and you (as their manager/colleague) are right for them.

A positive or negative experience during the recruitment process is likely to affect an individual's impression of the University. Negative experiences, especially, are likely to be shared with the individual's contacts, to the detriment of the University as a whole. Therefore, it is important to remember that you are representing the University during the process.

Top Tip

Getting recruitment wrong can cause wider reputational damage, as this candidate explains: 'I went for an interview with a large retail organisation. As part of the interview invite they sent me another candidates personal details by mistake, the interview lacked any structure and they never contacted me to communicate the outcome; I used to shop regularly with this retailer, however, having been treated so poorly, I now choose to spend my money elsewhere.'

Choosing appropriate selection methods

Selection methods should be relevant to the role you are recruiting to, by testing the person specification in a manner suitable for the grade of the post. It is important that the selection provides the candidates with a realistic job preview, to enable them to make an informed decision about the role. You should not endeavour to catch candidates out or put them under unnecessary pressure. We want them to feel comfortable so they can perform naturally and to their best.

Typical selection methods include:

- Structured interviews.
- Unstructured interviews.
- Presentations.
- Role scenario-based activities.
- In-tray exercises.
- Analysis of examples of existing work.
- Practical tests.
- Psychometric ability tests.
- Psychometric personality tests.

You should always use at least **TWO** selection methods; a structured interview plus at least one other. Using multiple-selection methods will give you a much clearer picture of whether a candidate meets the person specification for the role, as it will provide you with multiple perspectives of their performance. This chapter will talk you through all of the above methods. However, if you are in any doubt about what is appropriate for your role, contact your local HR team.

Using references as means of selection

References should not be used as a means of initial selection, as you should not use the perspective of an individual who has known the applicant in another context as a means of selection. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) support this position highlighting that 'Employers should seek employment references once a job offer has been made, not prior to interview'.

Ultimately, you need to be comfortable with the decision you've made based on the evidence you've seen and not rely on a reference. The reference should be used to 'back-up' the decision you have already made and, on that basis, references can still be a useful tool in your recruitment process.

Selection methods in detail

There are a range of selection techniques we can use to help us make the best recruitment decision possible, and using them will provide you with more detailed information on which to base your final decision.

Just remember that planning these tests can take time and can involve the need for additional administrative and organisational support. You also need to be clear what the test is assessing and that it's relevant to the role. For example, getting a candidate to do a presentation, where presenting information is not part of the role, is not appropriate.

- **Presentations** - Asking the candidates to present on either a defined subject, or one of their choice, to a relevant group can be a good means of testing their ability to verbally deliver information. For academic roles, this may be in the form of a mock

lecture or tutoring session; for other roles, asking a candidate to present on a pre-defined topic may be more appropriate.

- **Role scenario-based activities** – Setting up a scenario which an individual may come across in their day-to-day work may be the best means of testing actual performance of one or several of the competencies required. For example, asking a Project Manager to write a project plan based on a provided scenario would enable you to see their ability in something they'll be involved in as part of their role.

- **In-tray exercises** – This is essentially providing several mini-scenario-based activities and a deadline to test both the individual's ability to undertake the activities and how they prioritise them. For example, you may ask an administrator to prioritise and undertake several administrative tasks within an hour and ask them to provide a rational, for the order in which they attempted them.

- **Analysis of examples of existing work** – For academic or creative roles, it may be possible to ask candidates to provide examples of existing work for review and questioning. For example, asking a Graphic Designer to provide a portfolio of previous work or an academic to supply you with the piece of research they are most proud of. This can be then reviewed by a panel and appropriate questions asked.

- **Practical tests** – Practical tests can be useful in testing candidate's technical abilities to undertake a task. They are particularly useful within some fields where the ability to undertake certain aspects of the role cannot be easily tested at interview or through their application. IT is one example where testing someone's ability on a specialist piece of software may be of use to understand their level of competence.

- **Psychometric ability tests** – Psychometric ability tests measure an individual's ability in a particular area (for example verbal or numerical reasoning) in comparison with a 'norm' group (for example UK graduates). The results will then tell you if the individual is below average, average or above average in comparison to that group. Many different tests at different levels exist; however, you require specialist training to administer and interpret the tests. Therefore, if you are interested in this type of testing contact your local HR team to discuss your requirements.

- **Psychometric personality tests** – Psychometric personality tests ask candidates a variety of multiple choice questions with regards to how they work and their work environment preferences. The result of the test outlines candidate's preferences (for example a candidate has a preference for working in a team) which can then help shape your interview questions to explore the preferences further. It's important to remember that these tests do not measure ability. For example, someone may not have a preference for dealing with detail but might be capable of doing it. Again, as you require specialist training to administer and interpret the tests, contact your local HR team to discuss your requirements if you are interested in this type of testing.

The benefits of using multiple-stage assessments

Using multiple stages in your recruitment process to gradually reduce the number of candidates can save everyone involved time and expense, whilst allowing you to maintain a robust selection process. An example of a typical 'funnel' can be seen below:

Stage one

Telephone interview

8 candidates

Stage two

Structured face-to-face interview / presentation / practical test

3 candidates

Stage three

Make offer
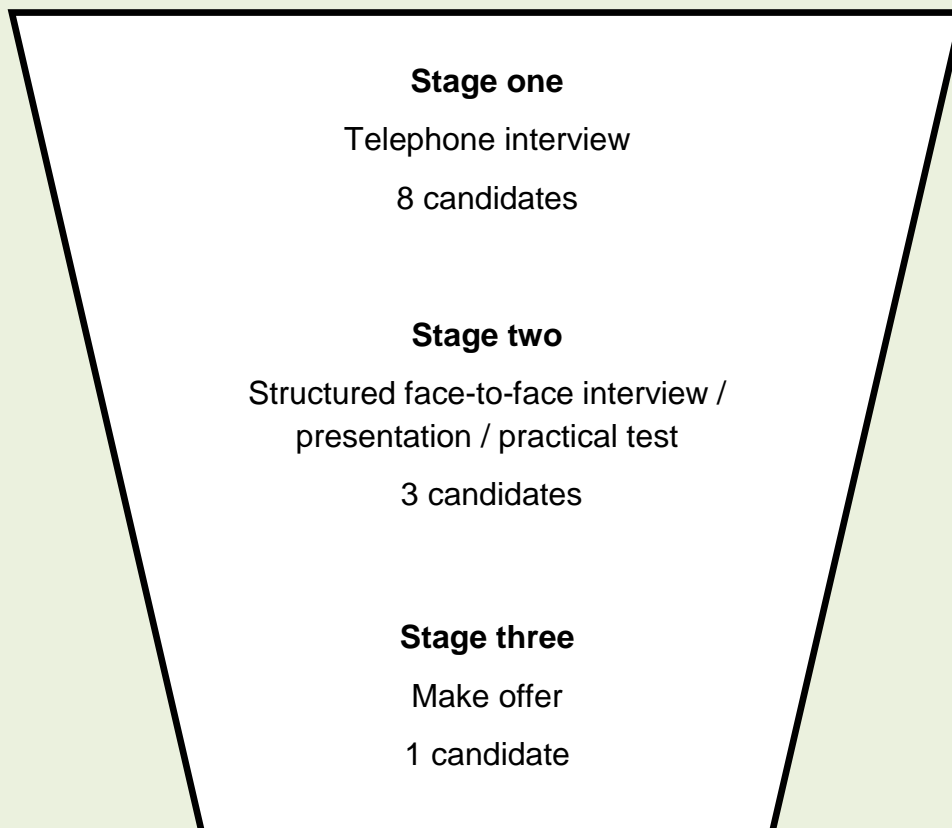
1 candidate

You've shortlisted eight candidates but, if you took all eight straight through to a structured face-to-face interview, you wouldn't necessarily have the time to spend with all of them to really understand if they meet the requirements of the role. It seems really simple but, by using a telephone or Skype interview to reduce this to three candidates, you've now got a lot more time to spend with those you are seeing face-to-face to assess them fully.

Each funnel for each role will be different. If you've only shortlisted two people, you may not see the benefit of this approach but, if you have 20 you'll almost certainly have to reduce numbers in some way prior to arranging face-to-face assessments.

However, you must also consider what is too much. In general, you could argue that the more information you gain with regards to a candidate, the better informed your decision will be and, up to a point, this is true. However, you need to strike a balance between making the process robust enough to make your decision and having reasonable expectations of the candidate.

A multiple-day, multiple-activity selection process, which culminates with an interview with the Vice-Chancellor, may be reasonable for a Director role. However, it is unlikely that someone applying for a mid-grade advisory role would feel this is appropriate for them. Always remember that this is a two-way process and the candidates will be judging us as much as we are judging them, so make sure what we are requiring of candidates is reasonable and that we are not asking for too much.

Top Tip

This HR professional outlines a situation where expecting too much from a candidate can potentially cause them to withdraw from the process: 'I recall recruiting for a middle management position in a previous organisation, the candidates had already attended two quite long selection days involving multiple tasks. However, the hiring manager wanted the only appointable candidate to attend a third day before making a decision and the candidate refused. He outlined that he had travelled 250 miles on two occasions and spent a total of nearly 15 hours in assessments and, therefore, he felt that, if the hiring manager could not make a decision, it showed a lack of capability and preparation on their part. In the end, no appointment was made and we lost a candidate who had really excelled in the process up until that point.'

Structured interviews
Interview planning and preparation

Whether or not additional assessment methods are used, interviews remain the most popular means of assessment in the UK and are an essential element of the overall selection process. If you have not interviewed anyone previously (or only interview occasionally), it can be as nerve-wracking being a member of the interview panel as it is being a candidate.

It is important for all members of the interview panel to prepare fully prior to the interview:

- Review all relevant documents including the job brief and candidate applications.
- As a panel, you need to prepare and agree a suitable number of interview questions, in advance, and decide who is asking which questions and who will take notes (see interview questions section below).

- Arrange suitable space for the interviews to take place, considering the room location, layout and equipment required.
- Ensure you've considered any reasonable adjustments requested by the candidates and put them in place as appropriate (see below).
- Panel members should take some time prior to the interview to understand the role and what the hiring manager is looking for. A lack of shared understanding by the panel on day of the interview can lead to members of the panel working towards different objectives, which can, ultimately, leave the candidate with a sense of confusion and/or the panel being unable to appoint any of the candidates.

Top Tip

A large volume of paperwork can be involved in the interview process, with panel members wanting access to candidates' applications and job description, etc. on the day. If printed, most of this paperwork is destroyed immediately after the interview, so consider downloading documents onto a tablet/laptop instead, to reduce waste paper and ink.

Making Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments may be requested by individuals with disabilities, to enable them to participate in the selection process and/or undertake the role they are applying for. Where someone meets the definition of a disabled person in the Equality Act (2010), we are required to make reasonable adjustments to any elements of the selection process, or job, which place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person.

If you receive a request and are unsure as to how to respond to it, contact your local HR team or the University Equality Policy Unit.

Interview expenses

Some expenses incurred while attending an interview can be reimbursed, for example travel expenses. Should applicants need to claim expenses, simply download the expenses form and ensure they complete it and attach any relevant receipts.

Interview panel makeup

In order to achieve a level of consistency across the University, we have agreed guidelines on the makeup of interview panels.

The panel requirements are detailed below. Depending on the job, the panel roles might be combined, with a panel member potentially taking on more than one role. However, to ensure appointments are not made on the basis of a sole opinion, all panels should have a minimum of two people. To help ensure our process is fair and inclusive, we recommend that all staff involved in recruitment and selection undertake equality training.

Very large interview panels do not create an environment in which either the panel or candidate is likely to perform to the best of their abilities. Therefore, it is expected that panel

sizes will not exceed the framework and no more than five individuals should be present on an interview panel (with the exception of fulfilling statutory obligations).

In line with best practice guidelines, single gender panels should be avoided wherever possible.

Grade 2 to 9

For every interview panel from **grade 2 to 9**, the core roles required are:

- **Chair** - an individual able to take a lead, introduce and manage the panel*. This individual is also responsible for co-ordinating the offer and feedback processes.

  *****For academic posts of grade 7/8/9 and Professional and Managerial posts of grade 8/9** - the UEG member responsible for the recruiting department, or their nominee, will be present on the panel and will normally take the role of Chair.

- **Departmental representative(s) (maximum of two)** - this will normally be someone who has been involved in the whole recruitment process, someone close to the role who is able to explain the role to the candidate and how it aligns with the department and University strategy.
- **HR view** - someone with sufficient awareness of HR issues that may arise, as well as the ability to support questioning and decision making in order to play a full role on the panel.
- **Independent representative** - an individual considered independent, in that they have no day-to-day responsibility or accountability to the position being recruited. This role could be fulfilled by another member of the panel unless there is compelling or statutory reason for the involvement of other independent representative(s) (for example Royal College Representative/independent expert).

Grade 10

For every **final** interview panel at **grade 10,** several core roles are required:

- **Independent Chair [UEG Member]** - an individual able to represent the University at a senior level and sufficiently removed from the role to be considered independent (for example VC, DVC).
- **Relevant UEG member** - the individual responsible for the recruiting area (for example Dean/Director).
- **Departmental representative** - an individual able to provide their expertise to the Relevant UEG Member (for example Head of School/Head of Service).
- **Senior HR representative** - a HR specialist with the ability support questioning and decision making in order to play a full role on the panel.
- **Independent representative** - someone sufficiently removed from the role to be considered independent. This role will usually be fulfilled by the Chair unless there is compelling or statutory reason for the involvement of other independent representative(s) (for example Royal College Representative/Independent expert).

Welcome and introduction

It is important the candidates feel welcomed to the University and are comfortable within the interview setting. The Chair of the panel may want to:

- break the ice; say 'hello', thank the individual for taking the time out of their day to join you and ask them if they managed to find the venue easily (something to start the conversation and make them feel at ease).
- introduce yourself and the panel members, including their job titles and offer the candidate a drink.
- outline the structure of the interview and the likely duration.
- outline that notes will be made during the interview to help with the decision making process. If you intend using a tablet for this purpose its good practice to tell the candidate so they are aware.
- provide an overview of the role and why you are recruiting (if appropriate to say so).
- ask them if they have any questions before you start.

Taking notes and scoring answers

The panel should make notes of candidate responses, so they can be referred back to during the decision making process and back up any decisions should your decision be challenged. It is important to develop a balance between documenting the answer and maintaining a focus on the candidate. We suggest that the individual on the panel who asks the question should only make limited notes for that question, leaving another panel member to record a more detailed account of the answer.

You may find that a scoring system for each answer will help you determine appointable candidates and the strongest performing candidate(s) overall. If you decide to use a scoring system, this needs to be agreed by the panel prior to the interviews commencing. A simple system could be:

0 - No evidence provided (of meeting the required competency).

1- Limited evidence provided.

2- Satisfactory evidence provided.

3- Exceptional evidence provided.

Top Tip

Be aware that all notes made may be made available to the candidate and/or legal practitioners in the event that your decision is challenged. Notes should be kept for six months and then destroyed securely.

Interview question overview

Interview questions must be designed and agreed well before the interview takes place; however, this does differ with interviews for Chair positions where the questions will be decided on the day. Ultimately you need to know how many questions you have so you can allow enough time to ask them. Designing 20 questions 15 minutes before the first interview may seem like a good idea, but if you have only allowed 30 minute interview slots, you may struggle to explore all of those questions with the candidates. Ideally, you need to start thinking about your questions before planning your interviews and inviting candidates. At the very least, you should have them confirmed at least three days before the interview so they can be shared with all the panel members.

In terms of question design, a good interview question will encourage a candidate to provide a response that confirms their knowledge, capability or experience in relation to item(s) in the person specification. The questions should be simple to understand - open and clear - and you should ask one question at a time, so as not to confuse the candidate with multiple questions.

Remember, it is your role to obtain sufficient evidence to support whether or not the individual meets the specification of the role.

Ideally, candidates should leave feeling that they have done the best they can and you shouldn't endeavour to catch candidates out with overly complicated questions or put them under unnecessary pressure. We should be creating an environment where candidates can be themselves, perform at their best and provide us with the best information possible, so we can make the best possible decision.

The interview should be structured so that all candidates are asked broadly the same initial questions and everyone has the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. Probing or follow up questions, however, may differ from one candidate to the next depending on the initial response.

Top Tip

Popular TV programmes like the BBC's 'The Apprentice' tend to depict recruitment interviews as an experience candidates should fear. We don't support this approach and, irrespective of the outcome of an interview, want candidates to leave us with the impression that we are a professional, inclusive and welcoming organisation.

Competency-based questions

Competency-based interviews are structured with each question targeting a specific skill or competency required for the role as detailed in the person specification. Individuals are asked questions relating to their behaviour in specific circumstances, which they are asked to back up with real-life examples of previous performance. The rationale behind this type of approach is that past behaviour can be a strong predictor of future behaviour in similar situations.

Very often a candidate's answer to an initial question will give some information but not enough to make an assessment of the competency you are assessing. Follow up questions can then probe further into the examples by asking for specific detail about the candidate's approach, behaviour or skills.

It is good practice to explain to the candidate how the interview will be structured and that you will be asking for specific examples of when they have demonstrated the competencies required for the role. It can also be a good idea to remind them that you are interested in what **they** specifically did or said, not what their team or colleagues achieved.

So how does this work in practice? Here are a couple of examples:

Example 1

- **Person Specification** *The ability to manage high profile projects, on time and on specification.*
- **Interview question** *Tell me about a time when you have delivered a high profile project on time and on specification.*
- **Possible probing questions '***How specifically did you ensure the project was delivered on-time?'* or *'Did you encounter any significant problems and what were they?'* and *'How did you overcome them?'*

Example 2

- **Person Specification** *Experience of communicating with a wide variety of stakeholders.*
- **Interview question** *Give me an example of a time where you've had to explain a concept to a variety of different people.*
- **Possible probing questions** *'How did you ensure your message was understood by everyone?'* or *'Tell me about how you varied your approach for senior stakeholders?'*

Good responses from candidates will explain to you:

- The **situation** they faced.
- The **task** they were involved in.
- The **actions** they took.
- The **result** of the work they undertook.

It is not uncommon for candidates to explain what they did (the 'actions'), but not put it into context of the 'situation' and 'task' or tell you what the end result was. Under these circumstances you may have to probe further to fully understand whether they meet the specific skill or competency you are testing.

Over 50 example competency-based interview questions, and follow up probing questions across many different areas, can be found in the last chapter of this guide.

Situational questioning

Whilst the standard competency approach to questioning may be used for the majority of your interview, you may wish to use an alternative style of questioning, called situational questioning, in certain circumstances:

- Competency-based questioning focuses on the past and, therefore, cannot keep up-to-date with rapidly-changing environments (for example in IT you can't ask about prior experience with a piece of software that is new on the market);

- The focus on the past does not account for the candidate's ability to undertake something they've not done previously.

Under these circumstances you may have to phrase the questions in more of a situational, 'scenario' or opinion-based approach, or use another means to assess a particular competency.

Example

- **Person Specification** *Strong customer service skills.*
- **Interview question** *'Tell me about how you would deal with a student who was ringing you because they were upset and angry about not receiving their exam results in the post'.*
- **Possible probing questions** *'How would you ensure the student understood what you had said?'* or *'What would you do to calm the student down?'*

If you choose to use this approach to address some skills you are looking for be aware that the information provided could be deceiving in that you are essentially asking a hypothetical question. If, for example, you ask the question above, the candidate could give you a detailed, textbook answer that sounds great, but that doesn't mean that's how *they* would actually deal with it if faced with the same situation. They could just be telling you want you want to hear as it's not about their actual experience.

This is why we don't suggest you use this type of question unless you really have to, although there will be situations where this type of questioning is appropriate. Strong customer service skills for example could also be potentially assessed by another method (not an interview) for example a telephone role play with a customer or asking the candidate to respond to a mock complaint email. This will be addressed in more depth in the next section.

Top Tip

We're often asked how long an interview should be. The simple answer is that it needs to be as long as necessary to ask the questions you've prepared and give the candidate some time to ask anything they wish to. Most interviews tend to be between 30-90 minutes in duration. It's not a good idea to rush, so make sure you allow sufficient time and plan appropriately before you invite your candidates for interview.

Top Tip

Don't be scared to probe a candidate on aspects of the examples they give you if you feel you require more information. If they are unable or unwilling to provide you with an answer, don't fall into the trap of leading them to giving you what you want to hear (for example would you do XYZ in this situation?). Probing questions are useful, leading ones are not.

What not to ask at interview

Interview questions should be used as a tool to assess a candidate's capability to undertake a role, so it is not appropriate to ask questions about a candidate's personal life or any questions which could be perceived as discriminatory in nature; this may include questions about:

- date of birth or their age
- gender
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- religion or lack of religion
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- personal plans (for example to get married or have children)
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- caring responsibilities
- personal interests (unless the individual has disclosed them, for example if an individual discusses their rugby team in response to a teamwork-based question).
- sickness or disability details, including the level of absence they have had from work.
- details about any criminal convictions.

All questions should be designed solely to assess their match to your specification.

Saying goodbye (for now!)

Just as welcoming the candidate is crucial, so is ensuring that they leave having had the opportunity to ask any questions they may have and that they know what the next steps of the process are going to be.

- Even if they have had the opportunity to ask questions at another point in the process, double check with them before they leave that they do not have anything else they would like to clarify with you.
- Outline to the candidate what the next steps of the process are likely to be. Remember, at this point, it is best to under promise and over deliver. Don't tell someone you'll let them know the outcome tomorrow if you are not certain you'll be in a position to do so.
- Thank them for taking the time to join you but don't get drawn into providing immediate feedback, even if the candidate asks 'How did I do?'

Top Tip

This candidate lets us know why this part of the process is so important; 'I came out of the interview really excited, they said they'd let me know the outcome within 48 hours by phone. After two weeks of not hearing from them, I decided to give them a call. It sounded like they'd forgotten about me, and after a rather insincere apology, that was that. I'll never apply for a job with that organisation or use their services as a customer again.'

Key Points – Assessment and selection

- **Overview** – Selection is a two-way process and, as recruiters, we must remember this at all times. Your job is to assess the candidate against the specification and to get the information from your candidates so you can make the best decision possible. You should not be trying to trick them or put them under unnecessary pressure.

- **Choosing appropriate selection methods** – A structured interview should always be part of selection, whatever additional methods are used. Using multiple selection methods will allow you to assess the candidate more comprehensively, as well as potentially providing them with a better preview of the job, to enable them to make an informed decision about the role. Remember, the selection process is as much about the candidate making a decision about whether they wish to work here, as it is us assessing them.

- **Structured interviews** – The interview panel make up should adhere to current University guidelines. Interview questions must be designed well before the interview takes place and agreed by all members of the panel. All candidates should feel welcomed to the University; simple things like introducing the panel members and offering them a drink can make a big difference as to how comfortable candidates feel.

- **Competency-based questions** – The majority of interview questions should target a specific skill or competency required for the role as detailed in the person specification. The best way to phrase these questions is to ask a candidate to give you an example of a time they've displayed that competency or skill in the past.

- **Situational questioning** – When it is unreasonable to expect a candidate to have already displayed a competency or skill in the past, a situational question can be used. Be aware, however, as research suggests, this is poorer predictor of future performance in comparison to asking the candidate to provide a real-life example of past performance.

- ***What not to ask at interview*** – Interview questions should be used as a tool to assess a candidate's capability to undertake a role. You must not ask questions about a candidate's personal life or any questions which could be perceived as discriminatory in nature.

- ***Other selection methods in detail*** – Using multiple-selection methods will allow you to assess the candidate more comprehensively, so you should use at least one selection activity (preferably two) at some point in your process, in addition to an interview. Any selection methods used should be relevant to the job, testing some aspect of the person specification.

- ***Using the power of multiple-stage assessments*** – Using multiple-stage assessments can be useful in many circumstances. Multiple-stage assessments need not be more time consuming, for example holding shorter Skype/telephone interviews as an initial assessment can free up more of your time at a later date to assess the candidate you wish to invite to campus.

- ***Saying goodbye (for now!)*** – All candidates should leave having had the opportunity to ask any questions they may have and that they know what the next steps of the process are going to be. Don't make promises that you cannot deliver on; it's better to under promise and over deliver than the other way around!

Making a decision 48

Making a decision

Who is the strongest candidate?

You must schedule some time following the interviews for the panel to discuss the candidates you have seen. Ideally, a decision will be made directly after the interviews while the information is still fresh in your mind but, time pressures or fatigue from a full day of assessment, may mean you feel that delaying the discussion/decision is more sensible. We suggest that a decision should be made within 48 hours of concluding the assessment.

Deciding on the best candidate(s) can be harder than you might expect, as you may have two or more candidates very closely matched and/or you do not have a consensus of opinion across the panel. Following this framework may help you reach that conclusion more easily:

- Decide which candidates are appointable and which are not, independently of each other – so don't compare them at this stage. By deeming a candidate appointable, you are saying that they meet all of the essential person specification, are able to undertake the role and you would be willing to offer them the position. If there is only one appointable candidate, then you've reached a conclusion.
- If there are more appointable candidates than roles, you'll then need to rank the appointable candidates in order of preference. If you've scored the candidates answers, referring back to the scores can help you determine this.
- If there is a difference of opinion across the panel, it is useful to discuss the merits of each candidate comparing and contrasting their performance to each question, or each selection activity, before agreeing, on balance, who is the strongest candidate.
- If a decision still cannot be reached, you could consider inviting the candidates in question back for a further assessment. It is only advisable to do this if you feel there are areas of the person specification which could be explored further to determine a difference between the candidates. You should also bear in mind the impact this will have on the candidates.
- If you've only one appointable candidate but feel you still have areas to address with them prior to offering them the position, you may wish to use an unstructured interview (see the next section).

Unstructured interviews

An unstructured interview is more about talking to a candidate about a topic or area, rather than asking a set of specific questions. It is widely accepted that they do not provide us with as consistent, results, as interviews with more structure and are more likely to create a situation where discrimination can affect the outcome. Therefore, the only circumstance in which they should be used is as a follow up to a structured interview/selection process in an uncompetitive setting.

They can be useful, for example, if you wish to further discuss a role, or clarify some points with a sole candidate before confirming an offer.

Making an offer

Preparation

It is essential that you ensure you have all the relevant information to make the offer before you make the call to the successful candidate. A verbal offer is still legally binding, therefore preparation is key to ensuring the offer you are about to make is correct.

The information you'll require includes:

- interview feedback (why you think they are a good fit for the job).
- the starting salary you wish to offer the candidate (and this has been agreed by your local HR team).
- basic details about the other benefits they'll be entitled to (for example holiday allowance).
- information on departmental ways of working (for example expected hours of work).

It is not permitted to offer additional benefits (for example offering to match the healthcare benefits or annual leave entitlement they have with their current employer). If you perceive this is going to cause an issue, you should discuss this with your local HR Manager for their advice prior to making the offer.

Making a decision on the starting salary to offer is often complicated by a range of factors. As a rule, you shouldn't just use the existing salary as a guide of what to offer. Salary matching can simply reinforce gender pay gaps and it's possible, in some cases, that the salary stated is not what they actually receive – so don't just try to match or slightly better it without considering other issues.

You should consider:

- what does the successful candidate bring in terms of knowledge and experience? May there be a case for an offer higher up the scale based on this?
- what are other people within the department/area earning and how does this candidate compare to them in terms of skills and experience?
- is this your only candidate (and therefore you may want to ensure you secure them) or are there good reserve candidates who you could offer to?
- if you appoint higher up the grade, the benefit of incremental progression is nullified.

- people are not always motivated by money and may be applying for a new challenge or for other reasons such as the environment, benefits and scope for their personal development.

All offers should be agreed with your local HR team prior to being made to the successful candidate. Offers should not be made within the discretionary scale points. Should it be necessary to consider an offer at this level, authorisation must be sought from the Deputy Director of HR.

Calling the successful candidate

This is where all of the hard work finally pays off and you are able to offer the position to your preferred candidate. Whilst on many occasions this will be relatively straightforward, never assume that this will be the case; this could be a big decision for the individual, their career and their family and so don't be surprised if it's not a simple offer and quick acceptance.

Usual Circumstances (offer and acceptance).

- Make sure you have all the information required for you to make the offer (agreed salary, working hours, start date, feedback on their performance at interview etc.).
- Remember verbal offers are legally binding so by making the offer you are entering the University into an agreement with the individual. Ensure you make it clear if the offer is conditional, for example, if we still need to get references, DBS check, etc.
- Call the candidate to make the offer, detailing what the offer is ('We'd like to offer you the position and offer you a salary of £x'). Try to be as clear as possible and enthusiastic, providing positive feedback on their performance throughout the assessment and why you think they would be a good fit for the role.
- Offer the individual some time to think about the offer if they require it. However, outline a reasonable timescale (that is reasonable for them and for you) within which you'll require an answer. For example, it's okay to say 'Could you let me know by Thursday morning?' During this period make sure the candidate knows when you'll be available for any questions they may have.
- It is reasonable for the candidate to expect the offer in writing before they provide a formal acceptance.
- Upon acceptance, discuss initial thoughts with regards to start date, any requirements they may have and the next steps.
- Inform your HR contact of the offer, so they can prepare the necessary information to formalise the offer.

Alternative Circumstances

- **Salary negotiations** - Candidates may ask you to reconsider the salary offer prior to them accepting the position. If there is some room for negotiation (for example, you have offered them the bottom or middle of the salary scale), then decide whether or not this is something you wish to consider and contact your local HR team for their advice.
- **Start date negotiation** - You should respect that a candidate may have a notice period to serve with their current employer, and may also have pre-booked arrangements in their diary.

- **Working hours negotiations** - Be as flexible as you can be with this. For some roles you may require a specific start and finish time, for others you may be able to be more flexible.
- **A candidate is waiting on the outcome of another interview before making a decision** - As with giving individuals time to think about the offer, set a realistic timeframe with which you require a response and ask the candidate to adhere to this.

Managing unsuccessful candidates

It's sometimes not a very pleasant experience as the hiring manager, but you must call each candidate (unless they have indicated that they would prefer to be contacted by another method) who attended interview to let them know the outcome of the process and you should do this in a timely manner, in line with the arrangements you've agreed with the candidate at interview.

You should offer to provide any feedback agreed by the panel. Do not add to this, even if the candidate asks for more information, without first discussing it with the panel. However, if a candidate declines this offer, respect their wishes. Sometimes offering to provide feedback at an alternative time is sensible as that moment may not be suitable for you or them. If so, agree a date and time to provide this. Feedback should be provided verbally, in a constructive manner and should be in line with the person specification.

Remember that even though the candidate may not have been successful on this occasion, they may be suitable for other roles at the University in the near future and, despite their disappointment, we want them to have had a positive experience with us. Therefore, it may be worth encouraging them to consider applying again in the future, or mentioning any suitable roles you may be advertising imminently.

Not making an appointment

There may be occasions where you will not have identified an appointable candidate.

At this point the best thing to do is to take stock with regards to why it did not work out as expected, as it could be due to a variety of reasons. You should never make an appointment if the candidate does not meet the specification or you believe the appointment would be 'risky'. This can be difficult when you have a vacancy and work is piling up but making a bad decision now could be far more costly in the long run. If you find yourself in this position, think about:

- **Candidate feedback** – particularly where a candidate has turned an offer down. What was the reason and was it something you could address/change?
- **Recruitment documents** – was the advert, job description and person specification written in such a way to give you the best possible opportunity of recruiting a suitable candidate? Have a look at the sections earlier in this document or contact your local HR team for help.

- **Advertising** – where the advert is placed can have a significant impact upon who sees it and who is likely to apply for the role. Your local HR team and our advertising agency will be able to help you with placing adverts in the best sources.
- **Expectations** – were your expectations in the person specification realistic? Are there likely to be people who actually possess all of the skills you are asking for? If not, taking stock of the applications you received and revisiting your specification is sensible. What is absolutely essential and what could be reclassified as desirable?
- **Re-organisation** – Consider reorganising working arrangements within your department so that skills that already exist in the team, but are difficult to acquire externally are maximised and the vacant role is more likely to attract suitable candidates. Your local HR team can help you with this thought process.
- **Time of year** – July and August, as well as December, are traditionally difficult months for recruitment due to the holiday seasons. If you advertised your role during this time you may want to re-advertise at a later date.
- **Multiple recruitment** – if you've recruited to a similar position several times within a short space of time, you may find that you start to receive fewer or lower quality applications each time you recruit. You may have to advertise in different places or wait until the markets refresh.
- **Luck – n**o two pieces of recruitment will ever be identical. Maybe your ideal candidate just missed your advert or was ill on the closing date so chose not to apply. Sometimes a bit of bad luck is all it is.

By making some small adjustments, you can make a significant difference to who you attract to the role.

Key Points – Making a decision

- ***Who is the strongest candidate?*** – You must schedule some time following the interviews for the panel to discuss the candidates you have seen. Initially, a decision must be made with regards to which candidates are appointable and which are not, then which candidate is strongest and will be offered the role.

- ***Making an offer*** – Make sure you have all the information required to make the offer. Whilst on many occasions this will be relatively straightforward, never assume that this will be the case; this could be a big decision for the individual, their career and their family, so don't be surprised if it's not a simple offer and quick acceptance. A verbal offer is legally binding, so ensure you have the authority to make the offer before you make the call.

- ***Managing unsuccessful candidates*** – It's possibly the most unpleasant part of the whole process but you, as the hiring manager, *must* call each candidate who attended interview to let them know the outcome of the process, and you should do this in a timely manner (in line with anything you've agreed with the candidate at interview). You should offer to provide any feedback agreed by the panel and remember that, even though the candidate may not have been successful on this occasion, they may be suitable for other roles at the University. Putting together a brief script to ensure you don't forget anything can be a good idea. It may also be worth encouraging them to consider applying again in the future, or mentioning any suitable roles you may be advertising imminently.

- ***Not making an appointment*** – Whilst it's not what you'll have been hoping for, there are occasions where you will not have identified an appointable candidate. This can be for a variety of reasons and we hope that by working with your local HR team you'll be able to identify why this is and how it can be remedied.

Considerations when recruiting internationally 55

Considerations when recruiting internationally

The process outlined in this guide should be followed for all recruitment at the University. However, there are a number of additional things you need to consider when recruiting internationally, especially when attracting candidates who do not currently have the right to work in the UK.

Advertising your role

For positions where we may need to recruit non-EU, EEA or Swiss nationals, we have to advertise the position for at least 28 days through a minimum of two relevant media sources. The role must also have a suitable rate of pay and skill level as defined by the UK Visa and Immigration Service. For example, a role requiring PhD level skills would usually meet this criteria. This is in order to satisfy the 'resident labour market test' required for the University to support visa applications for individuals who currently do not have the right to work in the UK. Always take advice from your local HR team with regards to this, or you may not ultimately be able to appoint your preferred candidate.

Assessment and selection

Travelling long distances to attend initial stages of selection can be both time consuming and very costly. By using multiple-stage assessments and making use of tools like Skype to conduct the first stage of the selection process remotely, you can reduce the travel requirements significantly. The Assessment and Selection section of this document provides more details of how to make use of multiple-stage selection processes and remote interviewing. For the benefit of both parties you should not make an appointment without a face-to-face interview, preferably on campus.

Making a decision

For jobs requiring PhD level skills, you may recruit the most suitable person for the job at the end of your selection process, regardless of their nationality. For other roles it may be necessary to appoint the most suitable person from the resident labour force (EU/EEA/Swiss nationals) before being able to consider other international candidates, even if they are not your first choice. Please take advice from your local HR team with regards to this issue, before making an offer to any of the candidates.

Obtaining a visa (for candidates who do not currently have the right to work in the UK)

Successful candidates, who do not currently have the right to work in the UK, will have to acquire this prior to us confirming a start date for their employment. If the University is to support an individual in obtaining a visa through the Certificate of Sponsorship process, there are several criteria we must fulfil including:

- that the role has a suitable rate of pay and skill level as defined by the UK Visa and Immigration Service;
- that the role has been advertised in accordance with the above guidelines;
- that the visa is applied for in a timely manner following the recruitment process (in accordance with current UK Visa and Immigration Service guidelines).

Always take advice from your local HR team with regards to the visa application process or you may not ultimately be able to appoint your preferred candidate.

Never assume that the information provided in the application with regards an individual's right to work in the UK is correct until you've seen the appropriate documentary evidence.

Moving to the UK

When a start date has been agreed, individuals relocating from abroad may need a little additional help and support and your local HR Manager will be able to help you with this. Our Relocate website also provides further information on the University, the Leeds area and UK systems (such as taxation and the NHS) to help people settle into the area and their new role at the University as quickly as possible. Our Student Education Guide is also useful to help new academic members of staff understand our ways of working.

Welcome and induction 58

Welcome and induction

Completing pre-employment checks

There are a number of checks required prior to the individual starting employment with the University. Whilst we need to check every member of staff's right to work in the UK and take a copy of the <u>original documentary evidence</u>, other requirements are dependent on the role, so check with your local <u>HR team</u> with regards to the requirements for each individual role.

Top Tip

Never assume that the information provided in the application with regards to an individual's right to work in the UK is correct until you've seen the appropriate documentary evidence. We may be liable to pay a fine of £10,000 should you employ an individual who does not have the right to work in this country.

Welcoming your new recruit to Leeds

It can be a good feeling to complete the recruitment process and look forward to welcoming your new colleague to the University. Depending upon personal circumstances and notice periods, the period between an individual accepting a position and starting their new role can be several months.

You should not assume that during this period that, because they've accepted the role, you no longer need to be concerned about them until their start date. Several things can happen:

- **Counter offer from an existing employer** – An individual's existing employer may not want to lose a valued member of staff and may do their best to persuade them to stay.
- **Other ongoing recruitment processes** – An individual may have other outstanding recruitment processes they are involved in.
- **Other factors influencing their decision can change** – Accommodation, family, gaining the appropriate visa to work in the UK etc. can all influence whether they ultimately decide to join your team or not.

Ultimately whilst you cannot influence a lot of the aforementioned, you can do your best to ensure that they continue to feel valued, that they are part of your future plans and you are there to help and support them if required. What shouldn't happen is that they are offered the role and the next time you have any contact with them is on their first day!

- **Keep in touch** – Depending on the period of time in between offer and start date, decide upon an appropriate frequency of contact. For example, if they are not starting for three months, you may decide to drop them a line each month to ensure everything is okay and to check whether they require any help or support from you.
- **Start their integration into the team** – Make sure they know you are setting up their working space, ordering any necessary equipment they require, keep them up-to-date with any appropriate developments in the team. You might also like to invite them to any planned events, be they work (for example away days or training activities) or social.
- **Induction** – A couple of weeks prior to the start date, provide them with an outline of what you've planned for them in the first week or two so they know what to expect.

It's important to strike a balance between being supportive and allowing the individual to serve their notice, and prepare for their arrival, and not feel too much pressure about a role they've not yet started.

Induction

Your first day with a new employer or within a new role can be a nerve-wracking and anxious experience. Individuals are likely to have recently left a familiar environment with familiar faces, to step into an unfamiliar team with established relationships and ways of working.

How quickly and well the individual settles within their new role can be influenced by a variety of factors, one of which is induction. This should be planned well in advance of their start date and, ideally, communicated to them in advance, so they know what to expect on their first few days at the very least. The very minimum you should do is:

- **Setting out your expectations for the role** – It can be a good idea to sit down and discuss the role and your expectations. Whilst this may have been covered to an extent during the selection process, you will now be able to discuss this in much more depth. Talk about probation and agree a probation plan in the first couple of weeks of employment.
- **Show them around** – Showing the individual the facilities within their working environment - fire exits, emergency meeting points etc. and across the wider campus can help them feel more at home.
- **Help them understand where they fit in** – Showing them how they fit into the team and how their role fits with the organisation's strategy and goals, can help them understand why they are here.

- **Help them understand how the team works** – Outlining ways of working which may differ from one employer to another, (for example flexibility over working hours, or when taking breaks) can help with understanding our culture.
- **Introduce them to colleagues from across the campus** – Introducing individuals to the wider department and colleagues who they may encounter in other teams can help them start to build good working relationships.
- **Provide health and safety information** – This is a legal requirement, and the sort of thing which is easy to forget once you start to get busy. Therefore undertaking the online training in the first day or two can be a good idea.
- **Provide practical information** – Inform them of information such as office opening hours, how to let you know if they are unwell or going to be late so they know how to deal with day to day situations.
- **Be available and understanding** – Sometimes there can be misunderstandings, small mistakes or people can struggle with a new role in the first few days. Having a manager who helps you through this period can make the difference between a successful working relationship in the long-term or not.
- **Put some time in your diary to meet regularly in the first few weeks** – It can be a good idea to put regular meetings in your diaries in the first few weeks, so you have a chance to discuss progress and any issues which arise.

A popular way of approaching many of the above considerations is to buddy a new employee with an existing one, so that an experienced member of staff can help them settle in and answer any day-to-day questions they may have.

Induction checklists and further support can be found on the SDDU website.

Top Tip

This candidate shares their experience as to why induction is so important; 'The first few days with my new company were dreadful. I received no training and then was blamed for making a mistake. They seemed amazed that I handed in my notice after two weeks, but I just could not see my future there.'

Key Points – Welcome and induction

- *Welcoming your new employee to Leeds* – It can be a few weeks (or even months) in between an offer being accepted and the start date. Do your best to ensure your new starter continues to feel wanted, that they are part of your future plans and you are there to help and support them if required. What shouldn't happen is that they are offered the role and the next time you have any contact with them is on their first day!

- *Induction* – How quickly and well the individual settles within their new role can be influenced by a variety of factors, one of which is induction. This should be planned well in advance of their start date and, ideally, communicated to them in advance, so they know what to expect on their first few days at the very least.

- *Completing pre-employment checks* – There are a number of checks required prior to the individual starting employment with the university. You should ensure your local HR team have all the information they require before confirming the start date.

Example interview questions

Skill Area	Example Questions	Example probes/follow up questions
Accuracy / attention to detail	Please describe a situation where it was important for you to pay attention to details?	Why was the attention to detail so important?
	Describe what you do to control mistakes and ensure accuracy in your work?	What checking mechanisms have you/do you use?
	Can you give me an example of a time where you have had to ensure complex information was communicated effectively?	How did you ensure the information was understood?
Customer service skills / service delivery	Please describe a time when you have had to deal with a very difficult customer?	What was the situation and how did you deal with it? How did you ensure the customer left happy? What would you do if you faced the same situation in the future?
	Can you tell me about a time where you have gone out of your way to meet a customer's needs/demands?	Why did you do this?
	How do you ensure your team/department/service understand the part they play in the strategy of the organisation?	How do you ensure this is understood?
Decision-making skills	Tell me about a time you've had to use your initiative, to resolve an issue.	What options did you weigh up? How did you come to the decision?
	Tell me about one of the most difficult decisions you have had to make in the past year/in your current role.	What made it difficult? How confident are you that you made the right choice?
	Can you talk about a time where you have been required to advise on strategic plans/comment on options that have a significant impact on the organisation?	What was the impact? What was the significance of the decision?

Influencing and persuasion skills	Please describe a time when you have had to clarify an issue?	How successful were you? In hindsight, what might you would have done differently?
	Tell me about a time when you have had to persuade someone/a group of people to your point of view	How did you do that? How successful were you?
	Tell me about a time where you have had to gain long-term support from team members/management/external stakeholders for a project/new initiative	What was your approach? How did you ensure buy-in?
Information gathering skills/analytical skills	Please give me some examples of when you have been required to process information?	Why were you required to gather the information? How did you present the information?
	Please give an example of when you have had to gather and present a high volume of data/information within strict time constraints/to meet a deadline?	How did you ensure you met the deadline? How did you balance the need for information/data with the time pressure? What was the outcome?
	What management information/data do you/have you collect(ed) and monitor(ed) to inform future team/strategic plans and priorities?	What improvements/changes to strategy or policy have you implemented/recommended as a result?
Initiative	Give an example of a time when you have done something beyond what was required of you?	What did you do? How did others react? What happened as a result?
	What changes have you initiated in your area of responsibility?	Why did you make the changes? What did you have to do to get them underway?
	Please give an example of when you have anticipated problems, based on experience/analysis/views of others and your own intuition?	How did you resolve the issues? What was the outcome?

Interpersonal and verbal communication skills	Please give us an example of when you have had to explain something difficult?	How did you overcome difficulties? How did you ensure the message was received and understood?
	Please describe a situation when you had to explain technical or professional information in layman's terms?	How did you make sure the information was understood?
	Tell us about a particularly difficult/complex message/piece of information that you had to communicate to a group of people/an individual.	How did you adapt your communication style to suit the audience? How did you ensure the message was understood?
Leadership and management/people development skills	Give me an example of a time when you have co-ordinated the work of others.	What challenges have you faced?
	Describe a time when you have been responsible for motivating/leading a team towards an objective.	How did you approach it? What happened as a result of your actions?
	Can you tell us about a time when you have had to manage staff through an unstable/unsettled situation?	How did you ensure staff remained motivated to perform? How did you keep people informed? How did you address questions and concerns from staff?
Project management	Describe an occasion when you have had to deliver a complex project to time and on budget?	What were the key milestones and how did you monitor these / ensure they were achieved? What difficulties did you have to overcome?
	Describe a project that you have managed where you have had to adjust/redefine the objectives.	Why was this necessary? How did you approach this?
	Tell me about a time when you have had to persuade project stakeholders to adopt your point of view.	What was your approach? How did you ensure buy-in?
Planning and organising skills	How do you organise your day-to-day workload?	How do you take account of interruptions/changes to your plans?
	Please describe a time when you have had to juggle conflicting responsibilities/a very busy workload?	How did you prioritise/manage your time?

	Give me an example of a time when you had to set effective priorities and measurable targets for others?	What considerations did you make? How did you monitor progress?
Problem solving	What frequent/day-to-day problems are you required to solve in your current role?	How do you ensure these are dealt with efficiently? What do you do if you are unable to solve the problem?
	Describe a creative solution that you have developed to solve a problem.	How did you identify the problem and come up with the solution?
	Describe a time you resolved a problem through collaboration with others.	What were the positive and negative aspects of the collaboration?
Teamwork	Please give us an example of when you have helped to improve the performance of your team?	What improvement did you identify? How did this improve team performance?
	Describe a time where you've experienced difficulties working in a team environment. How did you overcome these?	What was the outcome? If faced with this situation again, what would you do differently?
	Please talk about a time when you have lead a team to achieve a specific goal?	What challenges did you face? How did you overcome these?
Written communication	Please give some examples of when you have had to take messages or notes accurately?	How do you ensure accuracy?
	Tell us about a time when you've had to adjust your written style to suit a specific audience.	How do you approach this?
	Tell us about a time you've had to prepare a complex report and/or paper?	What was the purpose of the report? What was the outcome?
Research	Tells us about the piece of research you have been most proud of in your career so far.	Why have you chosen this piece of work over others?
	Can you describe and explain your work in a way that a layperson will understand?	How will your work advance your field of research?

	What plans do you have for further funding for your research, including the potential sources of funding?	How will you prioritise where you will apply for funding?
	What is the big question that you are aiming to answer?	Why is this important? How is this different to what others in the field are doing?
Student education	Please give us an example of a time where you have had to create new innovative teaching material.	What was the outcome?
	How have technological advances impacted upon your teaching?	How have you ensured technological advances have had a positive benefit for students?
	Please describe how you would structure a lecture for 100+ first year undergraduates.	How does this differ to how you would deliver a masters level lecture?
	What feedback have you received from your students and which have you responded to?	How was your response received?

Recruitment process overview