



Staff Recruitment and Development Policy

2020-21

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Committee Approval

Committee	Committee Action	Date
SMLT	Recommended approval	3 June 2020
Board of Directors	Approved	
	Date in force	1 August 2020

The Staff Recruitment and Development Policy will be reviewed annually by our Senior Management and Leadership Team (SMLT). Any amendments require the approval of our Board of Directors.

1. Introduction

Our continuing development and success is dependent on recruiting, engaging, developing and retaining staff who have the skills, knowledge, experience and dedication to deliver our vision, mission and values through our Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework is developed through our Annual Planning Cycle.

This Policy provides a framework which supports equality of opportunity for job applicants and all our staff, and values the principles and requirements of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Equality Act 2010. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy affirms our commitment to ensuring that no applicant or appointee is discriminated against on the grounds of: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

Section 2 of this Policy sets out our vision, mission and values.

Section 3 covers staff recruitment.

Section 4 covers our Annual Planning Cycle and explains its link to our Annual Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme (ASADS).

Sections 5 to 7 cover staff development, how we support staff to engage in research, and how we support staff with a disability.

2. Our Vision, Mission and Values

Those parts of our vision, mission and values that are relevant to the recruitment and development of staff are as follows:

2.1 Vision

Our vision is:

- To offer students from all backgrounds the opportunity to define and pursue success through education.

2.2 Mission

Our mission is to:

- Grow a diverse and dynamic academic community that values curiosity, creativity and critical thinking.
- Nurture a culture that rewards kindness, excellence and accountability to each other, our communities and the world.
- Inspire and support our students and staff to achieve their full potential and make valuable contributions to society.

2.3 Values

Our values are to:

- **Be inclusive:** Welcome difference as a source of strength and enrichment.
- **Be curious:** Ask questions. Be open to new ideas. Yearn to learn.
- **Show courage:** Challenge yourself. Dare to think differently. Stand up for what's right.

- **Make things happen:** Take ownership. Act responsibly. Get things done.
- **Don't be mean:** Talk straight. Don't play games. Treat people well.

3. Staff recruitment

3.1 Job Description and Person Specification

A Job Description and Person Specification is produced or updated for any vacant post that is to be filled. The Job Description sets out the main tasks of the job.

The Person Specification states both the justifiable essential and desirable criteria in terms of qualifications, experience, skills and abilities, and personal qualities, all of which are directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants. Our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor will review both the Job Description and Person Specification before finalisation in order to identify and address any issues that might prevent or deter people with a disability from applying for the job. The Disability and Wellbeing Advisor's contact details will also be provided at the end of the Job Description should anyone need the documentation in a different format, to ask for support, to discuss any issues around reasonable adjustments, or to request a guaranteed interview (provided the conditions are satisfied; see **Section 3.3.1** below).

3.1.1 Pay grade

Each post will be allocated a pay grade that sets out the minimum and maximum salary for that particular post.

The pay grade will comprise a number of salary points, starting with the minimum salary and ending with the maximum salary.

Subject to financial performance, we have a non-contractual scheme whereby an employee will have their salary increased by one salary point on 1 October each year, until the maximum salary for the particular grade has been reached. This salary increase is conditional upon the employee having been employed since the previous 1 April and having a successful appraisal by the specified date – usually 30 September.

Note: Salary increase will not apply during 2020-21.

A successful appraisal requires the following (this is a non-exhaustive list that may be amended by the Senior Management and Leadership Team):

- The appraisal documentation has been signed by both the appraiser and appraisee and uploaded to the appraisee's HR Online account;
- The employee has met all compulsory training and any other specified requirements; and
- There are no causes of concern recorded by the appraiser within the appraisal.

3.2 Advertising

Posts will be advertised in such publications that are appropriate to the audience, that are likely to produce the best candidates (subject to budget considerations) and that will encourage applications from all sectors of the community, thereby reflecting our commitment to equality and diversity. All adverts will include the following statement: *We are committed to being an equal opportunities provider.*

Details will also be posted on our website.

At the discretion of the Managing Director and Academic Principal (or nominee), some posts will *only* be advertised internally, in order to provide staff with opportunities for career development. If a post is

only advertised internally, this will be undertaken by circulating an email to all staff with details of the post.

3.3 Applications

Applications are normally made by submitting a letter of application (addressing all the essential and desirable criteria in the Person Specification) and a CV. In addition, all applicants are requested to complete a confidential online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be submitted separate to the letter of application and CV. Completion of this form will enable us to monitor the effectiveness of our policy and related procedures.

Within the spirit of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Equality Act 2010, we do not ask applicants any questions about health or disability during the application and selection process. However, this is subject to the following two exceptions:

- If an applicant is shortlisted, the applicant is asked to advise our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor if, because of health or disability, they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to participate fully in the selection process. Any information received, and any reasonable adjustments made, will not be disclosed to the selection panel.
- If an applicant is offered a post, the applicant is advised to inform our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor if, because of health or disability, they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to undertake the job.

If an applicant is offered a post and their CV does not contain their full career history for the three-year period prior to submitting their application, the offer is made conditional upon the applicant providing satisfactory details (and evidence, if necessary) of such gaps. This is only undertaken after an applicant has been offered a post to ensure any gap which is due to health or disability does not have to be disclosed at an earlier stage.

3.3.1 Guaranteed Interview Scheme for applicants with a disability

We actively welcome applications from persons with a disability.

If an applicant with a disability¹ meets the essential criteria for the job (as set out within the Person Specification), they will be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities at an interview under our Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

In order to request a guaranteed interview, an applicant is required to contact our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor, providing sufficient information to indicate that they satisfy the definition of 'disability' as set out in the Equality Act 2010².

When the shortlisting has been completed, the shortlisting panel will provide the Disability and Wellbeing Advisor with a list of all applicants: (i) who satisfy the essential criteria; and (ii) who have been shortlisted. The Disability and Wellbeing Advisor will inform the shortlisting panel if an applicant who has not been shortlisted qualifies for a guaranteed interview (because the applicant has a disability and satisfies the essential criteria). No details of the applicant's disability will be disclosed to the shortlisting panel. The Disability and Wellbeing Advisor will inform all applicants who have made a request for a guaranteed interview of the outcome of the request as follows: (i) selected for interview without considering the applicant's request for a guaranteed interview; (ii) selected for interview on the basis of the applicant's request for a guaranteed interview because the applicant satisfied all essential

¹ Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as being: a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial, e.g. if it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed, this would be considered 'substantial'. 'Long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.

² See Footnote 1.

criteria set out in the Person Specification; or (iii) not selected for interview on the basis of the applicant's request for a guaranteed interview because the applicant did not satisfy all essential criteria set out in the Person Specification.

3.3.2 Criminal convictions

In line with our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, we fully support the rehabilitation of offenders.

We will not deny an applicant the opportunity to better their life through employment on the grounds that the applicant has a criminal conviction.

Therefore, in the interest of social justice and in order not to deter an applicant with a criminal conviction from making an application, we do not require the disclosure of criminal convictions. This is subject to the following exception:

Some posts may involve frequent working with students with a disability, specific learning difficulty and/or long-term health condition, to provide them with advice and support. For this category of post, if an offer of employment is made, this offer will be made conditional on providing an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. If any convictions are disclosed on the certificate, we would make an assessment to determine whether the convictions are such that, from a safeguarding perspective, the applicant could put the wellbeing of our students in danger. If such a certificate is required, we will refund the certificate fee to the applicant. We will make clear in any job description and advertisement whether this exception applies. Currently, this only applies to the post of Disability and Wellbeing Advisor.

It should be noted that all our employees are subject to our Staff Disciplinary and Performance Procedures that provide a framework to deal with any cases of staff misconduct.

3.4 Shortlisting

A decision on whether or not to shortlist an applicant is an open and fair one based exclusively on the information contained in the applicant's letter of application and CV. An assessment is made initially against the essential criteria in the Person Specification. If too many applicants satisfy the essential criteria, an assessment is then made against the desirable criteria in order to determine the shortlist.

To avoid any unintended or unconscious bias, shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people and one of these will normally be the Line Manager to which the successful applicant will report. However, when determining shortlisting (and selection) panels, due consideration will also be given to the promotion of equality and diversity.

3.5 Selection process

We will provide appropriate training, development and support (as necessary) to those involved in the recruitment and selection process. As a minimum, all such staff are required to have completed the online ACAS Equality and Diversity training and to have read our Unconscious Bias Guidance Notes.

The primary selection process is an interview, the format of which will be the same for all candidates. Similarly, the same core interview questions will be consistently applied to all and will be based solely on the selection criteria. This ensures that all applicants are given the same opportunity to demonstrate that they are the best candidate for the post.

In addition, depending upon the post, a shortlisted applicant may be required to make a presentation and/or complete a test/exercise.

Where our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor is advised by an applicant that they have a disability, we will make reasonable adjustments to the interview (and, if applicable, the presentation and/or test/exercise) process.

3.5.1 References

Two references are required, but these are only requested after an applicant is offered a position. The offer will be made subject to the references being satisfactory.

3.5.2 Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate

As stated in **Section 3.3.2** above, some posts may involve frequent working with students with a disability, specific learning difficulty and/or long-term health condition, to provide them with advice and support. For this category of post, if an offer of employment is made, this offer will be made conditional on providing an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. If any convictions are disclosed on the certificate, we would make an assessment to determine whether the convictions are such that, from a safeguarding perspective, the applicant could put the wellbeing of our students in danger. If such a certificate is required, we will refund the certificate fee to the applicant. We will make clear in any job description and advertisement whether this exception applies. Currently, this only applies to the post of Disability and Wellbeing Advisor.

3.6 Complaints

Any selection or appointment decision made is final and cannot be challenged. Any complaints made can only be in relation to the processes followed and should be sent to the HR Manager for review. This review can only result in possible changes to processes and not a change in selection or appointment decisions.

4. Annual Planning Cycle

As stated in **Section 1** above, our Strategic Framework is developed through our Annual Planning Cycle. Our Annual Planning Cycle comprises the following:

- Strategic *development* through the development of a three-year Strategic Framework that is based on Goals and Sub-Goals
- *Implementation* of the Strategic Framework through the development of:
 - Annual Divisional/Departmental Actions
 - Annual Corporate and Divisional/Departmental Budgets (to ensure the necessary financial resources are provided for successful implementation of the Annual Divisional/Departmental Actions)
 - Annual Staff Appraisals and Development (where staff are set individual targets and any staff development needs are identified, to ensure successful implementation of the Annual Divisional/Departmental Actions)

4.1 Annual Staff Appraisals and Development Scheme (ASADS)

As articulated in our Annual Planning Cycle, our staff, collectively and individually, are key to the successful implementation of the Annual Divisional/Departmental Actions.

All our staff participate in an Annual Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme (ASADS). Staff reflect on their performance over the current year, set targets for the next year, and identify any staff development needs to enable them to achieve their targets. Individual targets are linked, where appropriate, to the relevant Annual Divisional/Departmental Actions. Periodic reviews are undertaken to discuss progress and to identify any further staff development needs.

Staff Appraisals and Development meetings start as soon as Annual Divisional/Departmental Actions have been approved and are normally concluded by 30 September.

5. Staff development

Our mission provides that we will inspire and support our staff to achieve their full potential and make valuable contributions to society.

We are committed to the development of all our staff to ensure each can play their part in enhancing our students' educational experience. Individual staff development needs are identified through the ASADS (see **Section 4.1** above). Our commitment to staff development is evidenced by the following:

- All our staff participate in an Annual Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme.
- As a member of Advance HE, we support our academic staff to achieve individual membership of the HEA either through the individual recognition route (for experienced academics) or by completion of a HEA-accredited teaching and learning qualification.
- We have developed and are delivering a Bloomsbury Institute Fellowship Programme (In-Bloom) which has been accredited by Advance HE. This Fellowship Programme will provide:
 - Professional services staff who support teaching and learning with a route to achieving HEA Associate Fellowship;
 - Academic staff who do not have a relevant teaching qualification or prior teaching experience with a route to achieving HEA Fellowship;
 - Academic staff who have prior teaching experience with a route to achieving HEA Fellowship.
- The University of Northampton (our academic partner) and Advance HE provide staff development and training opportunities for all our staff.
- Staff within our Registry Division and Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success are supported to become active members of the Association of University Administrators and Academic Registrars Council.
- Our Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme provides our academic staff with a confidential development activity which has a clear link to the improvement and enhancement of the student experience.
- Our academic staff may be required to participate in our Managed Teaching Observation Scheme primarily for development purposes.
- All our academic staff are required to engage in scholarship to ensure they have an up-to-date and current knowledge of their discipline, with appropriate breadth and depth to enable them to create high-quality experiences for our students.
- We provide comprehensive internal staff development and training opportunities for all our staff.
- We provide all permanent staff with an annual £500 allowance (£250 for permanent staff on a contract of less than 0.5 FTE) to enable them to attend external staff development and training events.
- We normally convene an Annual Teaching and Learning Conference which all our staff are encouraged to attend and also to present a paper.
- We have introduced a Staff Mentoring Scheme for all new staff, which includes a comprehensive induction checklist and the early flagging of staff development needs.

6. Research

Our Research Strategy articulates how we will develop, support and empower all our staff to achieve excellence in research that will be of direct relevance to the needs of academia, higher education, commerce, industry, and the public and voluntary sectors, in addition to ourselves. It includes work that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of research outputs, for example:

- Presenting a research paper at one of our Research Seminars or our Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- Presenting a research paper at an external conference
- Publishing a research paper in our Working Paper Series
- Publishing an article in a peer-reviewed journal
- Publishing a monograph
- Publishing teaching materials that embody original research
- Publishing other academic-related materials that embody original research
- Publishing professional services materials that embody original research

Research-active staff are categorised as new, junior, or senior researchers.

Researchers, regardless of their category (i.e. new, junior or senior), will work under an agreed Research Development Plan (RDP). This RDP is an overarching statement which is developed and agreed between the researcher, mentor (if applicable) and RDP Co-ordinator.

The RDP provides the researcher with a clear direction and strategic approach towards undertaking agreed research activities, and achieving agreed research outputs that will have a very considerable internal and/or external impact.

Mentors will assist new and junior researchers to formulate the RDP, which will include a staged output progression (e.g. internal Research Seminar presentation, external conference paper presentation, joint peer-reviewed publication, sole peer-reviewed publication, and contribution to our research environment).

The RDP will set out the development and support available to each researcher. This development and support includes:

- Allocation of a senior researcher to act as mentor for new and junior researchers
- Internal Research Forum
- Internal Research Seminars
- Internal Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- Internal Working Paper Series
- Individual £1,000 annual research allowance for each permanent member of staff on a contract of 0.5 FTE or greater, with an approved Research Development Plan (RDP) in addition to the £500 CPD and training budget (or £250 allocated to each permanent staff member employed on a contract of less than 0.5 FTE) for external research and scholarly activities

- Research leave based upon: tangible research outputs that have internal and/or external impact; and contribution to our research environment
- Scholarship to cover fees for the University of Northampton PhD by publication

Our Research Strategy places the development, support and empowerment of staff at its core, and will ensure that we retain (and continue to recruit) a highly qualified, experienced and motivated body of staff, both academic and professional services.

The quality of our teaching, particularly at Level 6 and beyond, will be enhanced by ensuring our teaching is informed by research in the broad areas of Accounting, Business and Law.

Our pedagogic-based research will lead to the enhancement of our students' learning experience across all our courses and at all levels, while our professional services-based research will lead to the enhancement of our students' higher education experience as a whole.

7. Staff with a disability

We are committed to providing a working environment that is inclusive and accessible for staff. As a Disability Confident Employer,³ we are mindful, therefore, of our responsibilities in terms of making reasonable adjustments in support of disability equality. Adjustments might involve changes to working patterns, adaptations to premises or equipment and provision of support packages etc.

We also provide compulsory staff training to ensure employees have sufficient disability equality awareness. This training is particularly relevant for Line Managers and Heads of Divisions/Departments given their particular responsibility for developing and supporting their team members.

Should a staff member acquire a disability whilst employed with us, or should an existing disability or health condition worsen, we will make every effort to enable them to continue in their current job or, where possible, an alternative one.

Staff responsible for running any internal training events are required to ask staff to provide details of any special requirements they might have so that these can be taken into account when designing and delivering the training. Our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor is available to provide advice on alternative delivery methods, the best format for handouts etc.

8. Related policies and procedures

- Annual Planning Cycle
- Annual Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Research Strategy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Strategic Framework
- Unconscious Bias Guidance Notes

³ The Disability Confident Scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing people with a disability.

9. Review

The Staff Recruitment and Development Policy will be reviewed annually by our Senior Management and Leadership Team (SMLT). Any amendments require the approval of our Board of Directors.